

Bram Longstaffe Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112092
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	337838
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Sheila Mawer

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Smart
Headteacher	Ms J Drake
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight sessions or part sessions and saw five teachers and 13 practitioners who work directly with the children. They held meetings with governors and staff and spoke to groups of children, and parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including the school improvement plan, the tracking of children's progress, the work children were doing and questionnaires completed by 74 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the planning of activities for indoors and outdoors and how well it meets individuals' needs
- the progress children make over time across the six areas of learning
- the impact of child-initiated tasks on children's independence and confidence
- the impact of the school's monitoring on children's achievement of any monitoring carried out.

Information about the school

Bram Longstaffe Nursery School is situated within a built up area on Barrow Island. Almost all children are White British. A small proportion of children have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school also operates a neighbourhood nursery and offers full and part-time childcare provision managed by the governing body. Some children attend both the nursery school and the childcare provision. A children's centre also operates from the school site and offers a range of extended services for children and their families. This is currently run by Action for Children and was not inspected as part of this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Bram Longstaffe Nursery and childcare provision is outstanding. 'This is a brilliant nursery and I am so glad all of my children have attended,' is one of the many positive comments from parents and carers. All children make great strides in their learning and development and behaviour is exemplary. A buzz of activity pervades indoors and in the wonderful play areas outdoors as children engage in the wealth of stimulating activities available and initiate their own ideas. All aspects of learning are promoted very well, though there are few resources to help children learn how to communicate using modern technology. The very positive relationships established at all levels enable children to develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem. They are very well cared for by adults who ensure that every child is safe, fully included and each child's individual needs are met through carefully tailored planning.

Engagement with parents and carers of the children in the school and childcare provision is exceptional. A wealth of information and opportunities are available for parents and carers to develop their own knowledge and parenting skills and be involved in their children's learning. Collaborative working with other agencies ensures that children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are supported most effectively. Many children entering the school and the neighbourhood nursery have skills at levels well below those expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development. Teaching and interaction from adults is consistently strong and, as a result, children leave the school with skills broadly in line with those typical for their age.

The improvements to the school and childcare provision are driven forward exceptionally well by the outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher who is ably supported by the assistant headteacher. All legal duties are met and the childcare provision complies with the requirements for registration. Staff have a very positive approach to developing their own skills and knowledge and speak with enthusiasm about development. Rigorous self-evaluation at all levels is accurate and used effectively to target action plans for improvement. This means that the school has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection and clearly demonstrates that it has excellent capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase children's progress and skills in using information and communication technology by:
 - extending the range of resources

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- providing training for staff in the latest initiatives in using technology to support learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**1**

Children in the school and childcare provision enjoy their time immensely. As one parent commented, 'My child is thriving in all aspects of his work and never wants to leave at the end of the day.' This is reflected in the very high attendance levels. Children learn outstandingly well from their individual starting points. All groups of children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make excellent progress and by the time they transfer to Reception classes they have reached the expected levels for their age. Children have excellent attitudes to their learning and a strong sense of personal ownership in all they do. They play a dynamic part in their learning and are given a wealth of opportunities to initiate their own ideas. They thrive with the physical and mental challenges offered indoors and outdoors. They display excellent levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and concentration. Teachers and staff skilfully encourage speaking and listening skills through the carefully planned activities and incidental opportunities; such as discussing events in their lives as they sit and chat at snack time. This has a positive impact and children show confidence as they initiate conversations with visitors as well as their peers and familiar adults.

The thoughtfully planned, stimulating environment and easily accessible resources enable children to think and play imaginatively and solve problems for themselves. For example, one child built a tent from chosen materials. When it collapsed, he said, 'I'll use stronger poles next time to keep it up.' Children use their imagination particularly well, for example with some taking on the role of fire officers and using resources to represent a fire pole and hose. Others built their own obstacle course and showed developing levels of coordination as they moved in different ways. The involvement of a resident artist provides opportunities for children to explore a range of media and build on their own ideas in two and three dimension. The construction made from a collection of boxes absorbed children's interest. Others practised counting and recognition of shapes and colours as they played a game together. Throughout the day children show developing social skills as they chat together, share toys and help one another. Basic skills are promoted exceptionally well and prepare children well for later life.

Babies and very young children are very well cared for. Staff are vigilant at all times and secure policies and procedures ensure that children's welfare needs and individual routines are met. Children have space to crawl and explore their surroundings in a safe environment. Staff encourage a healthy lifestyle and babies and children benefit from regular outdoor exploration and enjoy balanced and nutritious meals and snacks. Babies show developing independence, for example as they manage cutlery or as they select and play with toys. Individuals' sleep routines are followed and staff are very mindful to treat each child according to their individual needs, likes and dislikes.

These are the grades for children's outcomes

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment ¹	3
The quality of children's learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which children feel safe	1
Children's behaviour	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance ¹	1
The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The excellent indoor and outdoor provision and high expectations of staff ensure that all groups of children make significant strides in their learning. Children are extremely well cared for during their time in the school and childcare provision. Each child is allocated a key person who ensures that planning builds on children's prior learning, skills and experiences. Staff are highly skilled, well organised and know how young children learn best. Their interventions and questions are very timely and capitalize on the learning exceptionally well, for example promoting counting and matching skills while hanging dolls' clothes on the washing line.

The outstanding practice of observing children's achievements underpins the excellent progress they make. Observations are systematic and used very effectively to assess individuals' needs comprehensively. Information is used very well to plan next steps in learning and build on children's skills and knowledge. The tracking system for monitoring the progress of individuals has improved greatly since the last inspection and highlights and rectifies any underachievement. The indoor and outdoor curriculum has also developed and offers a good balance of activities across all six areas of learning. The curriculum is vibrant, totally inclusive and enriched further by collaboration with external agencies involved in supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents and carers are eager to express their delight at the provision and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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support for their children and the family. Resources promote and support all areas of learning well. However, the range available for helping children to communicate in a variety of ways, for example using electronic whiteboards, is limited at times and does not currently reflect new initiatives. The quality and continuous access to the outdoor curriculum is a great strength of this school. It is wonderful to see children taking calculated risks, for example as they climb low trees, under the close but not intrusive supervision of adults.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is dedicated to providing children with a high-quality exciting Nursery experience. She does this admirably, with the strong commitment of all staff. All staff are focused on removing barriers to learning and celebrate the achievements of all children. Inclusion and an equal opportunity for all to achieve are central to the school's work and success. As such, the school is highly successful in improving children's life chances and preparing them for the next step in their education. The school improvement plan is sharply focused and sets out clear plans for developing provision and outcomes further. For example, plans are in hand to improve further the rooms designated to childcare provision.

Comprehensive policies and procedures underpin highly effective practices within the school and childcare provision and all learning, development and welfare requirements are met. Safeguarding systems are rigorous and procedures are known and understood by staff. All required systems and procedures are in place to check the suitability of employees to work with children. The school effectively tackles any form of discrimination. Excellent partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies contribute significantly to children's development and welfare.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. Opportunities for children to learn about and understand differences between families in the local community and the wider world are taught well through role play, visits and special themes. Aspects of other cultures and faiths are explored through the celebration of different festivals and fundraising activities. The school is currently developing a partnership with another nursery school in Bradford.

The governors play an effective role in holding the school to account and know how well

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children are learning and enjoy their time at school. Governors show a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development and regularly visit the school. As such they provide good support and challenge for the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspectors are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. All agree that children enjoy school, feel safe and make good progress. Parents and carers agree that the school provides a high standard of nursery education and supports families well. Inspectors fully endorse these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bram Longstaffe Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	88	9	12	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	88	9	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	73	19	26	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	72	21	28	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	57	77	17	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	76	18	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	82	13	18	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	49	66	22	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	76	18	24	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	69	22	30	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	76	17	23	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	59	80	15	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	85	11	15	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



29 April 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Bram Longstaffe Nursery School, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 2RX

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when I visited your school recently. It was wonderful to see you all enjoying yourselves so much. I enjoyed talking with you and seeing all the super things you do each day. I think your garden and outdoor play areas are wonderful and I am really pleased that you can play outside as much as you like.

These are some of the things I found out about your nursery school.

- Mrs Drake and your teachers and helpers look after you exceptionally well and know exactly what to do to help each one of you.
- You make excellent progress in your learning and development.
- You really enjoy indoor and outdoor activities and these are really well planned to help you all learn.
- Your nursery is very good at helping you to develop in confidence and do things for yourselves.
- Your behaviour is excellent.

I think yours is an outstanding nursery school and so is the childcare provision. I know your teachers are always looking at ways of making it even better. I have asked your teachers to help you get even better at using the computer and other electronic equipment as you play and learn. They can do this by providing more resources and by learning about the latest ways of using technology to support your learning. I'm sure you will enjoy helping them to do this. Keep up all your hard work and best wishes to those of you moving to your new school in September.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sheila Mawer

Lead inspector

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